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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

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★ JAN 21 1935

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate radio stations, Monday, January 21, 1935.

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In our last Garden Calendar, I gave you a few suggestions about the location and the kinds of trees to plant around your homes, but I did not include evergreens.

There are two main classes of evergreens, first, the conifers or cone-bearing evergreens; including the Spruces, White pine, Cypress, the Short-leaf or Virginia pine, the Long-leaf pine of the South, the Junipers, including the Colorado juniper, and the Red cedar of the Eastern States, the Black Hills spruce, and a number of others that grow naturally in various sections of the country. The second class of evergreens include the rhododendrons, Mountain laurel, azaleas, and others, but these are more strictly ornamentals, and are adapted for border planting on acid soils.

In sections where the cone-bearing evergreens or pines will grow they are undoubtedly the best type of tree to use for home shelter belts because of the way they break the force of the wind. The ordinary deciduous trees shed their leaves in the fall, but offer considerable protection, especially if the shelter belt is broad enough. A double row of pines will often provide good protection for the home from the sweep of the wind. The white pine is one of the finest of the pines both for ornamental and shelter-belt planting, but unfortunately the white pine is subject to a number of limitations. It is not adapted to any but the natural white-pine regions of the country, and in the second place it is subject to the white-pine blister rust disease. The peculiar thing about this blister rust is that the disease spends one part of its life cycle on the foliage and stems of currants and gooseberries and the other portion on the white pine.

Norway spruce is another good evergreen for shelter-belt planting. It will grow under a wider range of climatic conditions than will the white pine and is easy to transplant. The Hemlock spruce is another good conifer for planting around the home and as a shelter-belt tree. Both the Norway spruce and the Hemlock spruce have the advantage that they will grow in moderately wet places, but White pines must have a well-drained location. The Black Hills spruce is adapted to the northern Great Plains section.

Our common Arbor vitae, which is so extensively planted as an ornamental, can also be used to advantage for shelter-belt planting. The truck growers in the Norfolk and Portsmouth areas of Virginia very often divide their truck farms into small fields separated by means of hedges of arbor vitae, which are allowed to grow to a height of 12 to 20 feet or more.

California privet is also used in the same way, but does not make quite as dense and compact a shelter as does the Arbor vitae. Both the California privet and the Arbor vitae can be trimmed so as to make a narrow compact hedge. Various types of cedar, especially the Red cedar, which grows so abundantly in Maryland and Virginia make an excellent windbreak when planted in a hedge row and they make fine specimen plants when grown alone.

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If you want a fine specimen evergreen to stand out by itself there is perhaps nothing prettier than a Colorado blue spruce or its European form which is known as the Koster blue spruce. In case you should plant either Norway spruce, Hemlock spruce, or the White pine for wind protection around your home, I would suggest that you set the trees somewhat closer than you would for either timber or ornamental purposes. You want protection from the wind, and in order to get it you must have a close compact growth. For this reason distances of 18 or 20 feet will give better results than greater distances. You might even plant a little closer in some cases than as the trees develop take out every other one. Normally, you would set these trees at least 30 to 40 feet apart.

Now, just a word about the use of the smaller evergreens for ornamental planting around the home. The Arbor vitae is one of the best of these for decorative purposes. You can get it in a number of forms all the way from the small round or globular type to the tall, narrow, pyramidal type. The retinosporas, especially the plumosa variety, are similar in many respects to the Arbor vitae but have more of a spreading and feathery habit of growth and are very handsome.

The other type of evergreens, the rhododendrons, laurel and azaleas are high class ornamentals and require an acid soil. The regular pines are not as discriminating as to acid and alkaline conditions of the soil, but require mainly a soil that is somewhere near neutral, but the rhododendrons, azaleas, laurel and plants of that type must have a distinctly acid soil.

One point I would like to make in closing is that there are evergreens for practically every locality and condition in this country and it is largely a question of selecting those that will grow under your local conditions.

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